

**Decision Notice
and
Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Flatiron Ridge FAS
Environmental Assessment**

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 1
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901**

January 5, 2004

Description of the Proposed Action: Upgrade of Flatiron Ridge FAS

The proposed action is to maximize the usable space at Flatiron Ridge, spreading use over a wider area and providing for additional boat and trailer parking. In addition it would provide for future trail links to a trail system to be developed in this area. The project would be phased in over five years, with the area west of the boat launch and the boat launch being completed first, and the helical pier installation occurring later as funding allows.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposed to coordinate with Avista to do the following:

The area west of the boat launch:

1. The current concrete picnic pad will be maintained, and the wood railing replaced.
2. A handicapped-accessible fishing platform that will cantilever out over the river will be constructed.
3. An ADA-accessible concrete access ramp to the picnic table and fishing pier will be constructed, and an ADA-accessible parking area created.
4. The shoreline in this area will be stabilized with riprap or some other appropriate method, and erosion control vegetation will be planted.
5. Additional parking spaces for single vehicles will be developed across the access road from the picnic table.

The boat launch area:

1. Two parking spaces will be extended to allow boat trailer parking, and one new parking space will be added.
2. The riprap shore protection in this area will be extended to the east to protect current facilities.
3. On the spit next to the boat ramp, the existing wood rail will be replaced.

Between the launch area and the picnic table:

1. Along the shoreline, between the boat ramp and the fishing platform, a walkway will be constructed on top of helical piers driven into the bank. The piers would be spaced along the shoreline. To avoid ice damage, the piers will be driven into the bank at a high enough elevation to be out of the water during the winter. Bumpers, running from pier to pier, will be installed along the front of the piers to allow boats to tie up for loading and unloading

supplies. The bumpers will also allow debris moving downriver during flood situations to hit the bumpers and continue downriver rather than hang up on the piers, causing either damage to the piers or erosion to the bank as water moves around the obstruction. The pier design will allow pedestrians access to the walkway along the riverbank between the boat ramp, and the picnic table and fishing platform to the west. This section could eventually become part of the trail system being developed in this area and will be available for fishing from shore.

Because the technology and construction technique that will be used in this area is relatively new, a small section will be built the first year and then analyzed at the end of a year to see if the construction is suitable for the environment in which it will be placed. If it proves to be suitable, the remaining walkway will be installed over five years as budgeting allows.

2. Parallel parking for boats and trailers will be developed on the right side of the access road to allow additional vehicle and trailer access. Boats will be able to tie along the pier system, making these areas readily accessible for loading and unloading supplies after the boats have been launched. This should free up the launch area.

Public Comment:

One public comment was received, supporting the project, but did question whether AVISTA funding could be better used to upgrade Finley Flats. While upgrades to Finley Flats are being considered, they are being done separately from this project.

Finding of No Significant Impact:

Based on the analysis in the environmental assessment (EA), I find Alternative C, completing the entire project over five years, to be the preferred alternative. I have evaluated the EA and applicable laws, regulations, and policies, and have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

An appeal of this decision can be submitted to the FWP director in writing within thirty (30) days. The appeal must describe the basis for the appeal, how the appellant has previously commented to the Department or participated in the decision-making process, and how the Department can provide relief. The final environmental assessment and the FONSI may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901. Please direct requests and questions to:

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Daniel P. Vincent
Regional Supervisor

Date